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Pastora Vows to Fight On, 'Immensely Alone'

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SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Oct. 4—The gold Rolex watch he used to wear has been sold to pay overdue bills, he says. Close advisers have deserted him, and C.I.A. financing has been cut off along with the telephones in his San José headquarters.

But Edén Pastora Gómez, the "Comandante Zero" of the Sandinista revolution, says he has returned to resume his 17-month-old battle to topple the Government in Managua that he helped bring to power.

But even he admits that his prospects are bleak.

"We are fighting alone, immensely alone," Mr. Pastora said, raising hands scarred by a bomb that killed five others during a news conference four months ago at Tauro Camp, a clandestine base in Nicaragua, across the Costa Rican border.

He spoke in an interview at the camp, one of the first interviews he has given since returning to the Nicaraguan side of the southern border. During the interview, Mr. Pastora, dressed in green combat fatigues and accompanied by his doctor, spoke openly of his troubles and his plans.

In the last three months rebel actions have disintegrated on the so-called southern front between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, according to several rebel sources and outside observers.

Rebel groups once allied with Mr. Pastora under the banner of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance have ousted him from their organization because he refused to join with American-backed rebels based in Honduras.

"He didn't unite us," said Anibal Ibarra, a director of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance in San José. "He divided us."

Since recovering from his wounds in June, Mr. Pastora has sought support in Washington and traveled to Europe with other Nicaraguan opposition leaders to meet Prime Minister Felipe González of Spain and Prime Minister Mário Soares of Portugal.

But he says he has received no guns or outside financing for "four or five months." His advisers say the Central Intelligence Agency, whose agents they refer to as "the blond ones," stopped aiding their forces over six months ago.

Mr. Pastora said he had been promised \$200,000 recently by a government he refused to name. But the blond ones, he said, had intervened and told the donor country not to provide the money. A Nicaraguan rebel source said, however, that Mr. Pastora had recently received "enough aid to survive" from Venezuela and Panama.

Few Troops Are Seen

A senior Western official in San José said C.I.A. financing for Mr. Pastora had been cut primarily because he had shown himself to be a poor military leader who was unable and unwilling to mount an effective guerrilla campaign.

"He never struck a real blow," the diplomat said.

Although a reliable source said Mr. Pastora had sent almost 500 armed men on a raid into Nicaragua the day before, his river camps appeared to hold few troops. There were no Sandinista troops in evidence along the rain-swollen San Juan River, and Mr. Pastora's men moved freely in daylight.

Faced with diminishing resources, Mr. Pastora said he was considering abandoning the largely unpopulated river area to mount a guerrilla war deeper inside Nicaragua, where he said there were peasant villagers willing to shelter and feed his troops.

He said he had 8,000 men ready to fight. But a Western diplomat in San José who monitors Mr. Pastora's activities closely said it was more likely that he had 3,000 men, of whom 1,000 to 1,500 were armed combatants.

These forces would appear to face a solitary struggle, isolated from the support of other Nicaraguan exile groups based in Costa Rica whose rivalry with Mr. Pastora occasionally appears to hold the bitterness of a drawn-out divorce action.

Alfonso Robelo, leader of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance, of which Mr. Pastora was once a leading member, announced in August that he had joined forces with guerrillas of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, based in Honduras.

Mr. Pastora called his ill-fated news conference four months ago to announce that he had refused to join such an alliance. He continues to condemn the leaders of the Honduras-based guerrillas as politically stained followers of the Nicaraguan dictator, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, whom the Sandinistas overthrew.

Bomber Still Unidentified

The bomber of the news conference is still unidentified. One indication of Mr. Pastora's feeling for his former allies is that he says he is not certain whether the attack was mounted by the Sandinistas or by "the extreme right" who wanted to destroy me as the only obstacle to unity.

After the bombing, Mr. Pastora was flown to Venezuela, where he spent 17 days in a hospital. While he was there, he says, his former allies in Costa Rica seized much of his military equipment and many of his followers deserted, some selling their weapons to Mr. Robelo's group.

A month before, the Costa Rican police took away most of Mr. Pastora's radio equipment after his supporters used it to broadcast live battles from inside Nicaragua to journalists in San José. The broadcasts went beyond the limits of official Costa Rican tolerance, a Western official said.

The military supplies that disappeared included two helicopters, four airplanes, two mortars and two .50-caliber machine-guns, according to Mr. Pastora.

Different Account of Missing Gear

He hinted that they had been taken on the orders of the C.I.A. to further enforce the decision to limit Mr. Pastora's ability to obstruct the alliance between Mr. Robelo and the Honduran-based rebels.

"There were a number of serious efforts to have him unite with the F.D.N.," a Western diplomat in San José said, using the initials in Spanish of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, when asked of the reported pressure on Mr. Pastora.

Mr. Ibarra of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance gave a different account of the missing equipment.

All of Mr. Pastora's former pilots voluntarily deserted and joined Mr. Robelo's group, he said. One pilot took the helicopter he had flown and disappeared. The other helicopter and two airplanes are at a hidden rebel airfield waiting for Mr. Pastora when he wants them, Mr. Ibarra added.

One of Mr. Pastora's missing planes, a Cessna 310, is now the subject of a Costa Rican police inquiry. The plane crashed in August while taking off from a remote airstrip owned by John Hull, an American rancher sympathetic to Mr. Pastora. Police investigators say the plane had flown to Costa Rica from El Salvador.

Both Western officials and a number of rebel sources agreed that Mr. Pastora had far more armed fighters than Mr. Robelo, who is thought to have no more than 500 troops.

But there have been reports that Mr. Robelo's forces are organizing in northern Guanacaste Province, to the west of Mr. Pastora's territory, and several observers suspect that they are receiving aid from the C.I.A.

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